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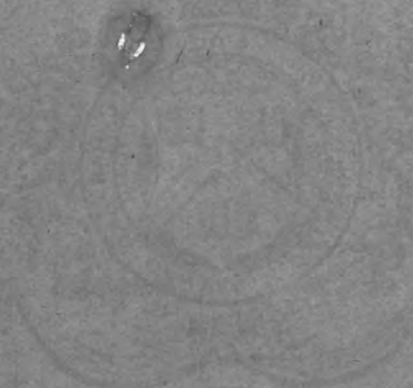
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THE LEGEND  
OF  
Saint Peter's Chair.

BY  
ANTHONY RICH, JUN., B.A.

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"Legend, which means—that which ought to be read, is, from the early mis-application of the term by impostors, now used by us as if it meant—That which ought to be laughed at."—TOOKE'S *Diversions of Purley*.

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Forming a Glossary of all the Words representing Visible Objects connected with the Arts, Manufactures, and Every-day Life of the Greeks and Romans. With Representations of nearly Two Thousand Objects from the Antique.

BY ANTHONY RICH, JUN., B.A.,

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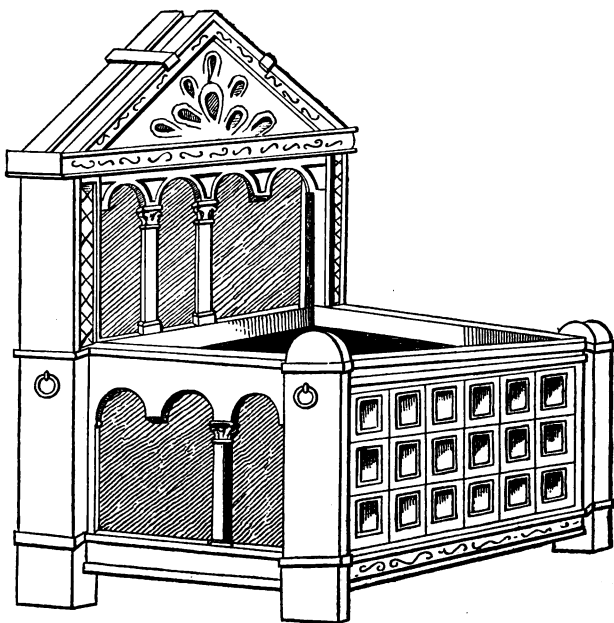
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**The Relic called St. Peter's Chair,**

Which, according to the legend, formerly belonged to a Roman senator, named Pudens, who presented it (circa A.D. 45) to St. Peter, from whom it descended, as an heir-loom, to the Vatican Basilica, where it is supposed to be now preserved.

THE LEGEND  
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**Saint Peter's Chair.**

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TO  
SYDNEY LADY MORGAN,

AUTHOR OF "ITALY," ETC. ETC.

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MADAM,

Among the controversies that have arisen on the subject of St. Peter's Chair, since the relic was proclaimed to be of spurious manufacture in your Ladyship's "excellent and fearless work upon Italy," as it has been justly styled by the greatest poet of his day, some original arguments in support of that statement were hazarded in the columns of the 'Daily News,' under the title of the "Battle of the Chairs;" which, though hurriedly thrown off, and anonymously published, had the good fortune to attract public attention beyond the possibility of conveniently gratifying it by supplying the demand for the paper which contained them. When first composed, the writer had not seen any actual representation of the object in dispute, nor any verbal description of its appearance, except the one circulated by Cardinal Wiseman, and extracted by your Ladyship, in a 'Letter' recently addressed to his Eminence. The inferences deduced were therefore in some measure dependent upon conjecture, suggested by the manifest inaccuracies and contradictions contained in his description; and might have proved erroneous upon further examination, or beside the question, from having been based, in the first instance, upon improper premises. It has since been my fortune to succeed in procuring a professed portrait of the chair itself, which is said to be concealed in the Vatican Basilica, and to have had an opportunity of perusing the whole of Dr. Wiseman's pamphlet, containing his remarks on your Ladyship's state-



ment, as well as another treatise, written in Latin, from which those remarks are wholly plagiarized. These additional resources have confirmed in a remarkable manner the accuracy of my first impressions, besides supplying many other irresistible proofs of the astounding delusion which has been so long practised in the matter, and yet so generally received. The firm conviction thus acquired from a dispassionate examination of the whole evidence, apart from all sectarian prejudices, or the religious animosities of conflicting creeds, has induced me to comply with the urgent solicitations pressed upon me, to transfer the results of my investigations from the ephemeral nursery which first afforded them a shelter, to the more durable and accessible domicile of a separate brochure; with an open avowal of the authorship, which appears to be due, as a test of sincerity, alike to the opponents I have ventured to combat, as to the friends I am anxious to defend.

To whom, then, could it be so appropriately dedicated, as to your Ladyship, whose wit, discernment, and courage gave the first and most effectual shock to the rickety fabric, and have been mainly instrumental in exposing a gross imposture, which all men, to whatever sect of Christian faith or religion they belong—the Greek, the Roman, or the Anglican—have an equal interest in exposing.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect,

Your Ladyship's obedient humble servant,

ANTHONY RICH, JUN.

*London, March 1851.*



## THE LEGEND OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR.

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SOME years ago Lady Morgan's work upon Italy was extracted from my portmanteau by an officer of the Roman custom-house. The man read the name in the title-page, and dropped the book as if it had singed his fingers, rejecting all entreaties to have it restored with a degree of ill-humour and asperity very unusual even amongst a class of officials by no means renowned for excess of civility. As I had not then read the offensive pages, I should, in all probability, never have known the reason which excited so much spleen, if her ladyship had not been induced, by the injudicious vauntings of her opponents, to resume the feathered weapon which she wields so well, in order to inform them that the story respecting a Mahometan inscription upon the so-called chair of St. Peter is derived from the authority of two eye-witnesses, both great and learned antiquarians, Denon and Champollion.\* Still this will not settle the dispute. It would require no great art for a wily and not over-scrupulous ecclesiastic, or some other person in his behalf, to double back, and transfer the charge of calumny, &c., from the recipient of the tale to those who first circulated it—from the living to the dead. Then some simple folks say, why not produce the chair? I ask, why was it ever concealed? Why is the light hid under a bushel—the little pea beneath a thimble? If the relic were brought out from its “superb” dust-hole, and exposed to profane sight and touch, it would not move us one step onwards or backwards in the dispute, as it is obvious that the Roman church can never be expected to convict itself, by exhibiting the chair with such an inscription upon it, which, if there, a “pious fraud” could so easily efface. We must, then, give up all reliance upon what might once have been, if permitted, the simple and easy test of ocular demonstration, and have recourse to circumstantial evidence, derived from antiquarian arguments,

\* Letter to Cardinal Wiseman, by Sydney Lady Morgan, p. 24.

in reference to the constructive appearance and details of the object itself, as described by Dr. Wiseman's own witnesses, who profess to have seen it heretofore. "All these arguments," he says,\* "tend to confirm the pious tradition of the church, and are alone sufficient to overthrow Lady Morgan's calumnious statement." Entertaining myself an entirely opposite opinion, I am convinced that if we had no other data to go upon than the description of this chair, as set forth in Dr. Wiseman's "Remarks," that description alone, when subjected to the test of archæological criticism, would of itself annihilate his conclusions, and at the same time confirm the opinion of his opponents.

The external appearance of the chair is exhibited by the woodcut which forms the frontispiece to this essay, from a design first published by Fr. Maria Turrigio,† repeated by Fr. Maria Febei, ‡ by Bollandi,§ and by Dr. Wiseman, who describes its material, form, decorations, and uses in the following precise terms:—"It is of wood, almost entirely covered with ivory, so as to be justly considered a curule chair. It may be divided into two principal parts: the square or cubic portion, which forms the body; and the upright elevation behind, which forms the back. The former portion is four Roman palms in breadth across the front, two and a half at the side, and three and a half in height. It is formed by four upright posts, united together by transverse bars above and below. The sides are filled up by a species of arcade, consisting of two pilasters of carved wood, supporting, with the corner posts, three little arches. The front is extremely rich, being divided into eighteen small compartments, disposed in three rows. Each contains a basso-relievo in ivory, of the most exquisite finish, surrounded by ornaments of the purest gold. These bassi-relievi represent, not the feats of Mohammed, as the readers of Lady Morgan might expect, unless they knew that the religion of the prophet does not tolerate any graven images at all, but the exploits of the monster-killing Hercules. The back of the chair is formed by a series of pilasters supporting arches, as at the sides; the pillars here are three in number and the arches four.

\* Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements regarding St. Peter's Chair, preserved in the Vatican Basilic. By N. Wiseman, D.D., M.R.L., and A.S., Rector of the English College, Professor of Oriental Languages in the Roman University. Rome, 1833.

† De Sacris Trophæis, cap. xxi, p. 117.

‡ De identitate cathedrae lignæ S. Petri. Roma, 1666.

§ In Analectis de SS. Petro et Paulo, tom. v.

Above the cornice, which these support, rises a triangular pediment, giving to the whole a tasteful and architectural appearance. Besides the bassi-relievi above mentioned, the rest of the front, the mouldings of the back, and the tympanum of the pediment are all covered with beautifully-wrought ivory. The chair, therefore, is manifestly of Roman workmanship—a curule chair, such as might be occupied by the head of the church, adorned with ivory and gold, as might befit the house of a wealthy Roman senator; whilst the exquisite finish of the sculpture forbids us to consider it more modern than the Augustan age, when the arts were in their greatest perfection. There is another circumstance which deserves particular mention in the description of this chair, and exactly corresponds to the time of St. Peter's first journey to Rome. This event took place in the reign of Claudius; and it is precisely at this period that, as Justus Lipsius has well proved, *sellæ gestatoriæ* began to be used by men of rank in Rome; for it is after this period that Suetonius, Seneca, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Martial mention the practice of being borne in chairs. This was done by means of rings placed at their sides, through which poles were passed, and thus the chair was carried by slaves upon their shoulders. At each side of St. Peter's chair are two rings, manifestly intended for this purpose. Thus, while the workmanship of this venerable relic necessarily refers its date to an early period of the Roman empire, this peculiarity fixes it at a period not earlier than the reign of Claudius, in which St. Peter arrived at Rome." This description, he also says, "will prove that the chair is not of Mahometan origin, but precisely such a one as the antiquary would expect to find claiming the honour of having been the episcopal throne of the first Roman pontiff."

Never have there been so many solecisms in historical knowledge, such an ignorance of artistic character, such a confusion of words and things, so much parade of learning with such shallow scholarship, so many errors exhibited in so narrow a compass, since the time when that adventurous youth, the Hon. Charles Boyle, undertook the forlorn hope of proving that the supposed Epistles of Phalaris were genuine. Fortunately, however, they are so patent, that it does not require the powers of a Bentley to demolish them.

The whole extract is in reality copied; that is, translated from a Latin text by a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard. I know not whether he enjoyed the reputation of being a scholar or antiquary of note; but Cardinal



Wiseman is usually supposed to be well versed in the written lore of philology, which may be learned in the cloister; and in the practical antiquarian knowledge acquired by observation of the monuments of antiquity, for which study a long residence in the city of Rome affords the most favourable opportunities. If, then, the passages cited were adopted under the impression that they propounded accurate notions, either classical or antiquarian, we have all rated the attainments of his Eminence in this branch of knowledge far above their real deserts. If, on the contrary, they were adopted by one who was well aware of the many errors they contain, but suffered to pass, according to his own insinuation, "as too well suited to his purpose to merit examination," then I submit that the charge of deceit, which he so roundly objects to another, must rebound with increased energy upon himself, and with serious detriment to his moral reputation. Either horn of the dilemma would be an unpleasant one for so distinguished a personage to sit upon; but I fear that he must be condemned on both counts of the indictment—of ignorance as well as fraud. When he exclaims, in a burst of eloquent infallibility, as if he had already forestalled time, and were issuing a *motu proprio*, not from the "Flaminian gate," but from St. Peter's chair itself,—"*I will set this calumny at rest; I will describe; I will give the grounds; I will account.*"\*—would any one imagine that he was merely going to transfer into a pamphlet of thirty-seven pages another pamphlet, of similar dimensions, published sixty-three years before in a dead language; and that without the slightest acknowledgment, but with a studied concealment of its real author? Yet such is the fact.† With the exception of inserting or omitting a word or two here and there, for the purpose of producing the *desired effect*, not a single argument has Dr. Wiseman added to his author's text, beyond the personalities directed against Lady Morgan, which ecclesiastics of a certain class are apt to use instead of argument; not a single authority has he adduced from his own stores in addition to those which figure at the bottom of his pages, but two, which his juvenile readers in the English College at Rome may have

\* Remarks, pp. 8, 9.

† The book has the following title: "Vin Alexandri Constantii Annales SS. Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, accedit appendix monumentorum de gestis cultuque B. Petri in urbe, eodem Constantio auctore." The third chapter of the appendix, De cathedra lignea S. Petri, comprises the whole of Dr. Wiseman's pamphlet.

taken for specimens of profound and recondite learning—a “Penny Magazine,” and a sixpenny “Guide of Venice.”

“So much may serve by way of poem,  
Proceed we therefore to our poem.”

The sides and back of the chair, which has a tasteful and architectural appearance, are *decorated with pillars supporting arches*. This is a distinct admission that the frame of the chair must have been fabricated at a period long posterior to the age assigned to it, and may be considered as confirming in some degree the theory of its supposed Eastern manufacture. The practise of supporting arches upon columns or upon pillars was unknown to the architects of the Augustan era; and was never thought of till it became customary to erect a new edifice with materials collected from some one more ancient, either damaged by accident, or designedly pulled to pieces for the purpose. It had its origin in the poverty of art, when attempts were made to compensate for the loss of correct design and exquisite finish by the imposing effect of space alone. As a fitting architrave was not always to be had, and one of stone or marble will not support a heavy superstructure over an intercolumniation of greater width than three diameters between column and column, arches were spanned instead from one column to another, on which walls were carried up to bear the roofing; but there is no instance on record, nor any authentic example in existence of such a method of construction, till long after the age of Augustus or of Claudius, probably not earlier than the time of Constantine, under whom the first Christian churches were erected, and the seat of empire transferred to Constantinopolis. From that period the style continued to be generally employed, both in the east and west, down to the eleventh century, when the Cathedral and the Baptistry at Pisa were built, the exteriors of which are covered with semicircular arches, supported upon columns and pillars. The names of Byzantine and Romanesque, by which this style is and has been long denominated, though not a positive proof, may perhaps be admitted by the worshippers of tradition as a cogent testimony, that it was first employed at Byzantium, and thence transferred to Rome. His Eminence is, doubtless, well acquainted with the contents of subterranean Rome, better than he appears to be with what still remains upon its surface; and his conversance with the works of

Christian art is, no doubt, more matured than those of the Pagan age of Augustus. There, in the Vatican and other cemeteries he will have seen many examples, on the decorative exteriors of marble sarcophagi, of this Byzantine style, with a series of columns and pillars supporting arches, of which I instance a few engraved in Aringhi, for the benefit of those who cannot examine the originals.\* The subjects are scriptural, and all of them exhibit in their design, manner, and execution a low period of art; while the general style of their architectural accessories displays a very striking resemblance to the constructive appearance of this chair;† and thus the argument drawn from its general appearance, instead of "forbidding us to consider it more modern than the age of Augustus," affords irresistible proof that it was so. Amongst some five-and-twenty different figures of ancient seats, copied from the antique, and ranging from the era of Etruscan pottery down to the miniature illuminations of MSS. executed under Septimius Severus, which are exhibited in Rich's Glossary,‡ as exemplifications of the various classical names of the same collected in the classed index, there is not a single one which bears the most remote resemblance to Dr. Wiseman's wondrous chair with its Byzantine columns and arches; and the same may be said of all those from Roman marbles and coins collected by Chimentelli, who wrote upon the express subject of ancient seats.

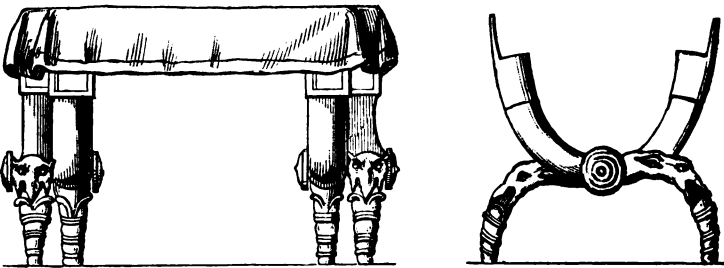
Next, the chair is *manifestly a curule chair*. Indeed! Most people have heard mention of this celebrated name; and one would have thought that at this day every school-boy was acquainted with its form and use. But as there is one person at least who is, or pretends to be, ignorant on the subject, I will, for his edification, explain its character.

\* Roma Subterranea, fol., Paris, 1659, vol. i, pp. 181, 187, 188, 191, 193, 201.

† The following sentence originally succeeded the above in the text: "Even the single fact of pillars, which are square columns as distinguished from round ones, being employed, is an evidence of late construction; for they were never used by the ancients in isolated situations, while the arts flourished in their purity. The temple at Trevi, where they occur, is not of a good period." (Gwilt, Encyclop. of Architect. book 3, c. 2.) When it was written I had not seen any representation of the chair, and could not make out, from Dr. Wiseman's language, whether the back and sides were open work or panelled—that is, whether the arches were supported upon columns, pillars, or pilasters. The woodcut shows that they are pilasters above, and half or three quarter columns below. Consequently, the argument drawn from the application of isolated columns of a square form drops altogether.

‡ The Illustrated Companion to the Latin Dictionary, pp. 34, 87, 134, 303, 309, 592, 593, 579, 627, &c.

The curule chair, Latin *sella curulis*, was a small portable seat, constructed so that it could be folded together like our camp-stools, and expanded to receive a cushion for sitting upon when in use; but its legs or branches were bent into a curve, instead of being straight, whence the Greek writers call it "the crooked-footed seat." \* The contrivance was adopted by the Romans from Etruria; and the thing itself was invented for the convenience of being transported with its owner wherever he went, whence it received its name, as the old Roman antiquarians indicate,† who connect the analogy with *currus*, like *equus curulis*, &c. The annexed woodcut represents an original curule chair, discovered at Herculaneum, as it would appear in front, when shut up, and on one side when opened out to receive the seat, for which the two small cavities at the top were intended.‡



Roman Curule Chair, found at Herculaneum.

How, then, can Dr. Wiseman's chair, with its four straight upright posts united by transverse bars above and below, its stiff permanent back and fixed seat, be a curule chair? Is it possible that he was not conscious of the blunder when he adopted this statement? Or was the term so captivating in its "symbolizing" sound that the temptation to deceive could not be resisted as not likely to be detected? But the contradiction does not end here. The privilege of using curule chairs was confined to the sovereign, the consuls, prætors, and curule ediles: and as it is not recorded in the "Acts of Sancta Pudentiana" that St. Peter enjoyed either of these dignities, it is clear that he could not have used his present when he got it; and if he had read his Phædrus as

\* Ἀγκυλόπους διότρος, Plutarch, Mar. 5.

† Aul. Gell. iii, 18, Festus, Servius.

‡ Examples of persons sitting upon curule chairs are engraved in pp. 667 and 669 of the Companion to the Latin Dictionary.



often as his host the senator seems to have done, he would probably have requited the senatorial fox for his gift after the manner of the stork in the fable.

The stiff, straight-backed, architectural chair, after being miraculously \* crumpled up into a low, crooked-legged folding-stool, is again touched by the enchanter's wand, when it undergoes a second process of transubstantiation, by suddenly expanding, like a stage trick in a Christmas pantomime, into a luxurious sedan chair, "*a sella gestatoria*, with rings at its sides to adapt it for being carried by slaves upon their shoulders." If this is the sort of "information" which Dr. Wiseman supposes "may not be uninteresting to his catholic readers," he pays them a very pretty compliment indeed; for it never would be received, even for common sense, by those who are accustomed to analyze their ideas, or to attach a definite notion to the words they use.

First, of the rings. It was necessary to commit the absurdity of affixing them to a curule seat, in order to connect the employment of a chair made by an upholsterer in the age of Augustus with a peculiar usage of it stated to be prevalent in the age of Claudius. Now it is remarkable that although every other part of this piece of furniture is described with elaborate minuteness—the legs, the sides, the back, the arches upon pillars, the ivory carvings, the ornaments of purest gold—not a syllable is breathed about the material, design, or workmanship of "the rings." But it is well known that all, even the commonest domestic utensils of the Romans, as well as their parts and appendages, both at the time of Augustus and long afterwards, were made of the choicer metals, bronze, gold, or silver, always of a fanciful and tasty design, and artistically finished. Nothing then being said in our descriptive catalogue about these rings beyond the bare mention of their existence, it is but a

\* This passage was originally written "by some *Romish* miracle," which term I am informed is offensive to my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. I make the best apology I can for my inadvertence by withdrawing the word, and accompanying the alteration with the assurance that I should never wish to follow the priestly example of Dr. Wiseman, by selecting terms which are intended to be personally injurious and offensive, nor to cull my vocabulary from Exeter Hall or the controversial pulpit. If, then, any other expressions are still left which are open to the same objection, I beg to request that they may be considered the result of error, not of intent; and to proceed from a laudable desire to discriminate accurately; although I fear that such a task has now become impossible, since the ample folds of the church cover so many millions of catholics who are not *Roman* catholics, of *Roman* catholics who are not *papists*, and of *papists* who are not *cardinalites*.

natural inference to suppose that they do not possess anything worthy of observation either in material or design; and as the author by whom the original description was given, had so fine an eye for the "exquisite finish of the sculpture," we might conclude that they were nothing more than four common iron rings attached to the chair at a subsequent period for the purpose stated, when it first came to be used for chairing its owner. To "make things comfortable," that period and that usage is attempted to be fixed by calling it a *sella gestatoria*, which kind of conveyance our philologist says "began to be used by *men of rank*\* at Rome in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, which exactly corresponds to the time of St. Peter's first journey to Rome." This is not an accurate statement; and, whether from ignorance or design, it conveys an impression very much the reverse of the truth. The passage from which the inference is artfully drawn is to be found in Dio Cassius,† wherein it is first written that Claudius suffered from bodily infirmity, especially from a sort of St. Vitus's dance, a rickety motion of the hands and head, which is also mentioned by Suetonius.‡ On this account he used to be carried in an upright chair, with a covering over-head,§ which kind of conveyance, says Dio, he was the first person of the male sex amongst Romans to make use of; for Augustus, Tiberius, and others before him were carried in a reclining, or invalid's chair,|| such as women use. He then makes this important addition:—But now, in my time, the employment of sedans is not confined to the sovereign exclusively, for we also who are of consular dignity are carried in them. Dio flourished 194 years after Christ, or more than a century later than the assumed residence of St. Peter at Rome; and, consequently, by Dr. Wiseman's statement, he was carried about in a sedan more than a century after his death. It is difficult to conceive what class of readers such logic as this is addressed to.

But if the chair described as St. Peter's were not a *sella*

\* The words in italics are not to be found in Dr. Wiseman's original; who, from being more honest or more wise, or expecting more intelligent readers, does not resort to the expedient of "cooking the account," or garbling passages to make out his case. They are a pure interpolation by the "Rector of the English College at Rome," and contain a *suggestio falsi*, which, if it had emanated from a neophyte of the seminary, ought to have been immediately checked by a copious application of Dr. Birch's refresher, laid on to his young clerical hide without mercy and without compunction.

† Lib. xl, cap. 2.

‡ Claud. 30.

§ Διόρω καταστέγγω, Latin, *sella gestatoria*, Suet., Nero, 26; Vitell. 16.

|| Σκιμρόδιον, Latin, *scimpodium*.

*gestatoria* after all, the "remarkable circumstance which fixes its date at a period not earlier than the reign of Claudius," will only be remarkable for the folly of the person who propounded it. And most assuredly Dr. Wiseman has been as unfortunate in his selection of this term, as he was when he called it a curule chair. The *sella gestatoria* introduced by Claudius must have resembled in general conformation one of the confessional boxes now to be seen in the church of St. Peter at Rome. It has been shown already that it was covered by a roof over-head. That it was closed at the sides by panels may be collected, with an almost equal degree of certainty, from the circumstance, that a person when sitting in it was concealed from the public view; since we learn from the passages of Suetonius above quoted, that Nero and Vitellius made use of a *sella gestatoria*, when they wished to pass through a crowded locality in the day-time without being seen. For the same reason the opening in front, whether partial or entire, must have been furnished with curtains to draw at option and conceal the inmate, if it had not a regularly panelled door, like the modern sedan. If, on the other hand, the epithet *gestatoria* be taken in a general and not specific sense, including both descriptions of conveyance, those used by women as well as men, it is equally well authenticated from a passage in Juvenal that the former were closed all round with curtains at least;\* and from its being made a reproach for respectable women to be seen abroad with their curtains undrawn.† They must then have been furnished with a covering or a tenter overhead to fix the curtains on, and four upright posts to support it, if they had not a back or panels at the sides. Consequently the supposed chair of St. Peter, which possesses none of these essential parts, could not have been a *sella gestatoria* under either assumption.‡

Did my demonstration end here, I should feel confident of a verdict from any impartial jury on the score of antiquarian evidence alone. But I will throw all that to the winds; I will admit that the narrative and nomenclature, which Dr. Wiseman has borrowed without being aware of its

\* Juv. i, 124; Suet. Otho, 6.

† Senec. Ben. l. 9; Tertull. Pall. 4.

‡ I regret that it is not in my power to refer to, or produce an example of these two sorts of sedans from ancient monuments; but none of the kind are known. A figure of the *lectica*, or palanquin generally used by the ladies of ancient Rome, as restored by Ginzrot (Wagen und Fahrwerke) in accordance with the texts which describe it, is given at p. 373 of the Companion to the Latin Dictionary.

absurdity, only proves the borrower to be as imperfect a scholar as his original. Still the chair, which is called St. Peter's, was never "carried by slaves upon their shoulders," nor were "poles ever passed through the rings at its sides for that purpose." Unfortunately for our learned Theban they lie flat against the sides of the chair,\* like those affixed to the front of a chest of drawers; and thus are well adapted for moving the object forwards, backwards, or sideways by hand *upon* the ground; but the very instant that St. Peter's slaves had fixed their levers into the rings, and proceeded to raise the first bishop of Rome *from* the ground, the chair must inevitably be tilted over, and his holiness the fisherman, seal, keys and all, sent sprawling into the gutter. This irreverend image, be it remembered, is Dr. Wiseman's suggestion, not mine.

"Ille nefasto te posuisset die,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ et sacrilega manu  
 Produxit, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Te, *triste lignum*, te caducum  
 In caput domini immerentis."

The chair is enriched with *ornaments of the purest gold and carvings in ivory*—a circumstance which enables Dr. Wiseman to work a third miracle upon this marvellous seat. Having already transformed it from a curule chair into a sedan, he proceeds in a subsequent passage, to transmute it from a sedan into "an ivory throne."

\_\_\_\_\_ "Nil fuit unquam  
 Sic impar sibi."

Now, it is remarkable that Chimentelli, who lived and wrote at the very time when Alexander VII deposited the chair in its present hiding-place, and who received the donation of a golden medal from the Pope himself, as a reward for the fulsome flattery heaped upon his holiness for that act—it is certainly remarkable, to say the least of it, that Chimentelli should omit all mention of the ivory and the gold. His account is simply this, that it is made of wood, and of very coarse workmanship.† Not a word more does he say about it. But let that pass. My business is to prove, from Dr. Wiseman's own premises, that Dr. Wiseman's deductions are erroneous, and totally devoid of truth by his own confessions, without

\* See the engraving on the frontispiece.

† "Lignea est, et admodum rudi opificio." (Marm. Pisan, cap. xix.; Bonon. 1666.)



resorting to the assistance of others. I only mention the circumstance as a lesson to his Eminence, that charges of "unblushing calumny" should not be so readily launched against every person who may happen to differ from himself; for here we have a direct discrepancy upon a mere point of fact, derived in each case from reports on ocular testimony, between two persons, both contemporaries, and both devout members of the same infallible church. Surely, if Chimentelli, or his informant, could have overlooked such prominent features as these fine ornaments of ivory and gold, Dr. Wiseman's informant might easily have missed observing a few Cufic letters, which he did not understand, and probably mistook for worm-holes.

The ornaments and sculptures on the chair are of *exquisite finish*. Without seeing them, it is impossible to pronounce an opinion as to the correctness or fallacy of this assertion. There is no trace of them in the engraving from which our frontispiece is copied. Dr. Wiseman himself has never seen them. It rests, therefore, upon the testimony of Turrigio or Febei, with Dr. Wiseman's *imprimatur*; and as they all betray such profound ignorance of the history of the fine arts, as not to be aware that the practice of supporting arches upon columns was not introduced into use for two or more centuries after the age of Augustus, we may well infer that neither the one nor the other had an eye sufficiently educated, or, in other words, were possessed of sufficient taste, "which is a standard formed by experience," to be capable of discriminating between the styles of sculpture prevalent at Rome during the rise, the progress, and the decadence of that art, under Augustus or under Constantine. But let this pass also; and be it admitted that the ivory carvings really are the most exquisite, and of the best period. This will not help us to determine the time when the chair was made; still less will it prove that the wooden frame was constructed at the same time as the ivory carvings attached to it. Indeed, the two exhibit, in the description given, such obvious differences of style in regard to their ornamentation as alone would induce us to believe that they were not both products of the same epoch in art. Then, what proof is there that the carvings of a pure and early age were not affixed to the woodwork of a chair manufactured in the age of decadence? just as our Wardour-street dealers "make up" their old-modern furniture with bits of carving executed some centuries ago. That such was the custom at Rome, under

Constantine and his successors, Dr. Wiseman must be fully aware, when he calls to mind the triumphal arch built by Constantine, which he knows to be decorated with bas reliefs stripped from the arch of Trajan.\*

Now, these bassi relievi represent, *not the feats of Mohammed, but the exploits of the monster-killing Hercules*. This is announced with an air of triumph, as if it settled the dispute, and confounded Lady Morgan, Denon, and Champollion at a blow. The admission is certainly important, and, if true, will go far to confirm the statement circulated by her ladyship, and the story that the chair was first brought into Italy by the Crusaders, with other spoils, from the East. In the very primitive ages of Christianity—that is, under the first pope, St. Peter—the votaries of that simple faith, which, in practice as well as dogma, was then directly antagonistic to the rites and usages of paganism, had not yet begun to mix up the sacred with the profane. Subsequently, when converts were increasing, and there was a reason for inducing conformity, it is admitted by the Roman Catholic writers that many objects and customs were adopted or retained by them as being “indifferent in themselves, and applicable as symbolical in their own rights and usages;”† but it is not conceivable to any rational mind, that St. Peter would have countenanced a myth extracted from heathen text books, by permitting his apostolic chair to be decorated with graven images, embodying one of the legends which he came purposely to destroy. Dr. Wiseman must know, as well as myself, that amidst all the host of sculptures, mural paintings, engraved gems, terra cottas, coloured glass, &c., preserved in the Christian sepulchres of subterranean Rome or elsewhere, none are ornamented with other than scriptural subjects, signs, and symbols, *when* the style of their design or execution is referable to the era of Augustus or of Claudius. If any trifling article of pagan character and fine workmanship is discovered in them, as the cuckoo's egg is found in another bird's nest, he knows that it would be on that very

\* Dr. Wiseman's authority, like an honest man, as I believe him to have been, though a very simple one, admits at once the probability that the ivory carvings might have been placed upon the chair for ornament's sake after it was made; but he does not seem to be aware that such an admission destroys all evidence which might otherwise be drawn from them to establish the age of the chair itself. Our Dr. was not quite so dull in this respect, and he therefore very prudently omits the passage from what a schoolboy would call his “crib.”

† Marangoni, Delle cose Gentil. e Profan. trasportate nel uso ed ornament delle Chiese.

account rejected by the antiquarians of his own creed, as the genuine property of Christian men. The examples he quotes from the book which he has translated do not in a single instance belong to the age of the "*early Christians*"—an expression conveniently indefinite—but to a period of from two to three hundred years and more *after* the time of the apostles, when Popery and Paganism had already shaken hands and formed a close alliance.

Now for *the labours of Hercules*. Under these twelve labours the artists and poets of Greece personified and symbolized the yearly passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac,\* thus creating an astronomical myth out of the very ancient religion far spread amongst the fire-worshippers of the East, and taught by their priests, the Persian Magi. This creed was extensively diffused amongst the Greek population of Asia, as well as through Egypt, Persia, Parthia, &c., until the establishment of Islamism under the successors of Mahomet; so that there would be nothing surprising if a native of those parts, after the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople, should have possessed a piece of household furniture constructed upon an architectural model in the Byzantine fashion, and decorated with ornaments emblematic of his religious creed. Nor would it be astounding if the Saracens should have carried away this chair as a portion, and that a valued one, of their plunder; for all the nations of antiquity invested their chairs of state with a high degree of veneration and respect. To quote a single instance, selected from many, but which is extremely apposite. Trajan carried away the royal chair, decorated with ivory and gold, amongst the spoils of his Parthian victories, and succeeding Roman emperors pertinaciously refused to restore it, when frequently reclaimed by the Parthian envoys. Hadrian gave back the captive daughter of the king sooner than part with the chair, though he made a promise, which he nevertheless broke, to relinquish that also; † and Antoninus Pius, when reminded of the promise, and asked to fulfil it, ignored his obligation, and kept the chair.‡ Now, then, if St. Peter's chair *is* decorated with gold and ivory, but has *no* Mahommedan inscription upon it, there is just as good, and better, historical evidence to identify it with this Parthian seat, covered with Gheber ornaments, thus clearly traced to Rome, and kept there,

\* Macrobi., Saturn. i, 21.

† Spart., Hadr. 13.

‡ Lamprid., Anton. 9.

than with the purely conjectural and absolutely unauthenticated gift of this made-up hybrid seat, of the Roman senator Pudens.

With regard to the contested inscription, I cannot think that the ocular testimony of two respectable witnesses, such as Denon and Champollion, can be rebutted by noisy charges of calumny and forgery; and, therefore, I shall at once state my belief that it is or *was* there, although the "religion of Mohammed does not tolerate any graven images at all." Truly so. Neither does the religion of Christ tolerate the adoration of a statue of the heathen Jupiter. Yet crowds of Christians may be seen every day in the "Vatican basilic," kissing the bronze toe of that divinity,\* who has had the Paganism "taken out of him" by a Papal consecration, and the substitution of a door-key for a thunder-bolt in his hand. How many Pagan temples of old Rome, when no longer tolerated as such, have yet been tolerated when converted by a fresh inscription into Papal churches? How many Pagan gods, goddesses, heroes, and abstract personifications, have been tolerated into Romanized saints?† Why should the Moslem be more scrupulous

\* The usual ceremony is to kiss the foot two or three times, pressing the forehead against it between each salutation. In the church of the *Minerva*, also at Rome, there is a marble statue of Christ, executed by Michael Angelo, the foot of which is likewise exposed to a similar species of devotion. But the holy fathers to whom it belongs seem to have set more store upon the value of their statue than upon the zeal of its votaries—for they have covered the projecting foot with a bronze shoe, to prevent abrasion of the toe-nails by the frequent kissings impressed upon it. I, for one, am ready to celebrate their wisdom in this matter; but at the same time I do think that they might endeavour to dissuade the Christian devotee from offering to the statue of Christ at Rome a more abject worship than his heathen progenitors offered to the statue of Hercules at Agrigentum, "whose mouth and chin were somewhat worn, because in their prayers and thanksgivings they were accustomed not only to worship, but to kiss it." (Cic. in Verr., I, lib. iv, 43.)

† I will only trouble my readers with a single instance, which is too edifying and too appropriate to be omitted. The ancient Greeks worshipped Bacchus under the name of *Dionysius*, and gave him also the title of *Eleutherius*, which the Romans translated into *Liber*, the usual term by which this god is styled amongst them. Two principal fêtes were appointed in his honour—one at spring-time, which was celebrated in the city, and thence termed the town fête (*urbanum*), the other in the autumn, which was celebrated in the country, and thence termed the rustic fête (*rusticum*). To this latter an extra day was subsequently added, called the festival of Demetrius, out of flattery to Demetrius, king of Macedon, who held his court at Petra, on the Gulf of Thessalonica, and who was adopted in the year 303 into the Roman martyrology as "The Martyr of Thessalonica." The jolly god of wine appears also as a martyr under his oriental name of Bacchus, being described as "Saint Bacchus, who suffered martyrdom in the east in the year 302," precisely the same era as Saint Demetrius in Macedon. Now the pagan calendar would announce the autumnal fêtes of Bacchus in the following terms: "The rustic festival of Dionysius

than members of the holy Roman church? Why should he reject his lawful and valued plunder, when the successors of St. Peter had taught him a simple and easy method to quiet his scruples, and destroy the pernicious influence stamped upon it by its unbelieving owner, viz., by inscribing upon it his own confession of faith, "THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, AND MAHOMET IS HIS PROPHET."

Dr. Wiseman then proceeds to suggest a probable origin for what he is pleased to call Lady Morgan's "foolish and wicked tale." For this purpose he commences a fratricidal attack upon another chair, also inscribed with Cufic characters, and reputed likewise to have belonged to St. Peter, which is now preserved in a church at Venice, and which Lady Morgan is accused of "confounding" with the curule seat, or sedan chair, or ivory throne, preserved in the Vatican. Lady Morgan, on her part, has shown, by her 'Letter to Cardinal Wiseman,' that the generous suggestion of "blundering and malice," was a gratuitous and erroneous assumption on his part. It is not incumbent upon me to defend or refute the Venetian tradition respecting the Venetian chair; but I must say, that if an unprejudiced person were compelled to make option between the rivals, the stone chair of Venice, notwithstanding its Cufic\* inscription, has by far the best claim of the two to the honour of having been used by St. Peter. Theodoret, one of the fathers of the Greek Church, who lived in the fifth century, has recorded that St. Peter's episcopal chair, or throne, as he terms it, was still

Eleutherius—*Festum Dionysii, Eleutherii, rusticum*;" and in the modern Roman calendar it figures thus: "The festival of Saint Dionysius or Denys, and of his companions Saint Eleuther and Saint Rustic." They found that the pagan calendar announced on the previous day the feast of Demetrius, *Festum Demetrii*, and therefore they inserted on the one preceding their own, "The vigil of Saint Demetrius, martyr of Thessalonica," and on the one before that, "The fête of Saint Bacchus;" so that if we refer to the breviary or calendar of the modern Roman priest, there will be found the following directions: "7th Oct. Festival of Saint Bacchus. 8th. Festival of Saint Demetrius. 9th. Festival of Saints Denys, Eleuther, and Rustic." Verily this beats Dr. Wiseman hollow; for it makes five gods out of one person, while he more modestly contents himself with making three seats out of one chair.

\* Although the characters are similar in both inscriptions, the matter they contain is very different, and could not be mistaken one for the other. The words on the Venetian chair contain a verse or two of the Koran. (Wiseman's Remarks, p. 29.) That upon the Vatican one, "There is but one God and Mahomet is his Prophet." (Lady Morgan's Letter, p. 7.) These different sentiments shew that the interpretations of Denon and Champollion did not refer to the inscription upon the Venetian chair, which had been already deciphered; and also that the narrative which they gave to Lady Morgan was a sober reality.

preserved at Antioch in his day.\* In that city the disciples of Christ first distinguished themselves by assuming the name of Christians; and there, too, was the seat of empire founded by the Crusaders in the eleventh century. The chair was brought to Venice as a gift to the Doge Pietro Gradenigo from the Emperor Michael. It is of stone, a material more adapted than wood for endurance from so remote a period, and, in a Roman Catholic sense at least, more likely to be selected for the seat of that Church's first bishop, as symbolizing the "rock" upon which it is figuratively said to be built; for what is Peter to it, unless *petrified*, or the successor of Peter without the pun? † The Cufic characters subsequently carved upon it will not establish the date of its manufacture one tittle more than the names of Phidias and Praxiteles, inscribed in *Roman* letters upon the figures of Castor and Pollux, as they are called, on the Monte Cavallo, or than the Palimpsest Commentary of St. Augustin on the Psalms will prove that the parchment, on which it is written over a MS. of Cicero's *Treatise de Republica*, was stripped from a sheep in the eighth century.

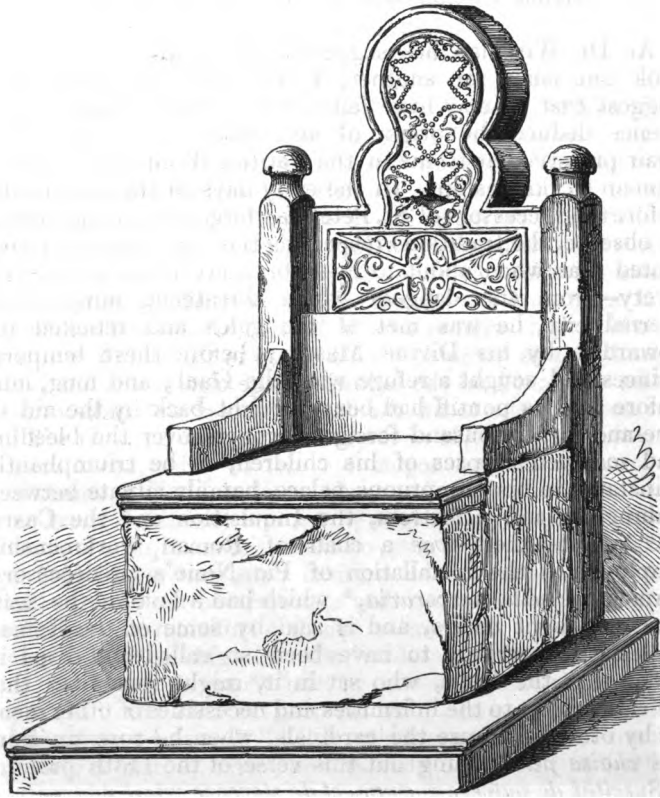
The woodcut ‡ on the following page clearly demonstrates that no argument to fix the date of this chair can be drawn from the date or style of the inscription upon it. It will be obvious to every one acquainted with the principles of design that the back originally ran in a straight line somewhat lower than the two upright posts, and that the highest part of it, with its Moorish arch, on which the inscription is traced, does not belong to the original plan, but was added by the Mahommedans when they appropriated the chair to their own purposes. It likewise affords a sufficient contradiction to the "learned Orientalist" who thought he would come to Dr. Wiseman's rescue in the Puseyite pages of the "Morning Chronicle," by assuring us that the "Mahommedans never had any chairs at all," though he very wisely omitted to quote the chapter and verse of the Koran in

\* Theodor., Ep. 86.

† The assumption of supremacy claimed by the Roman church rests upon a very sorry pun, more worthy of Pasquino than the great founder of Christianity, to whom it is indecorously attributed. It is a quibble on the name of Peter, which in the accusative case of the Greek language sounds *Petron* (Πέτρον), and the name of a rock, which in the same case sounds *petran* (πέτραν). Now *petros* signifies a loose piece of stone, such as one man would throw at another, *petra* a fixed and permanent rock; and Christ says that he will found his church, not upon "this *Petron*, viz., Peter, or a pebble, but upon "this *petran*," viz. the rock which he pointed to in himself. So St. Peter's pun is as worthless a forgery as St. Peter's chair.

‡ From Cornelius, *Ecclesiæ Venetæ Antiquis Monumentis Illustratæ*, vol. 13, p. 194; Venet. 1749.

which such articles are prohibited.\* Dr. Wiseman states that the Venetians themselves “treat the monument without much respect,” and in proof refers to the very recondite and overwhelming authority of “the first guide-book of Venice which he happened to open.” One guide-book is I presume as good as another. The very first which I happened to



St. Peter's Chair, preserved in the Patriarchal Church at Venice.

open says, “In this church is seen the chair of St. Peter, in which he sat at Antioch, covered with Samaritan characters. It was presented by the Emperor Michael III. to Giustiniano Participazio, and not to Pietro Gradenico in 1310, as the modern inscription by a very gross anachronism asserts.”

\* We have all heard of a sect who went about breaking statues — the Iconoclasts, but they were Christians; yet no one before the learned philologist of the “Morning Chronicle” has discovered the sect of Cathedraclasts, or chair



Nevertheless, if what Dr. Wiseman says of the Venetians be correct, it would only prove that they and their priesthood are far advanced in intellectual culture, and aversion to imposture beyond the Romans and their priesthood; for, if the two hobbies were to be run in the race of humbug one against the other, the betting would be ten to one upon Venice against Vatican, and the favorite sure to win.

As Dr. Wiseman has suggested that Lady Morgan mistook one chair for another, I will, with his permission, suggest that he may have fallen into a similar mistake, and thence deduce the origin of *his* "foolish story" that the chair preserved at Rome in the Vatican Basilica is of choice Roman workmanship. In the early days of the pontificate, before the successors of St. Peter had forgotten, or had ceased to observe, the traditions respecting their first bishop, which stated that when about to fly—not, however, in a flunkey's livery—from the dangers which threatened him in the eternal city, he was met at the gates and rebuked for cowardice by his Divine Master; before these temporal princes had sought a refuge with the Gaul; and long, long before a pious pontiff had been brought back by the aid of five-and-forty thousand foreign bayonets over the bleeding and mangled corpses of his children, to be triumphantly reinstated in his sumptuous palace, happily situate between a dungeon and a fortress, the Inquisition and the Castel St. Angelo—there *was* a chair of Roman workmanship employed at the installation of Pio Nono's predecessors, termed the *sella stercoraria*,\* which had a hole in the seat, like our night chairs, and is said by some of the Roman ecclesiastical writers to have been so called and used in order that the Pope, who sat in it, might remember that he was subject to the infirmities and necessities of other men; or by others, because the cardinals, when he rose up from his *chaise percée*, sung out this verse of the 113th psalm,† "*Suscitat de pulvere egenum, et de stercore erigit pauperem.*"

breakers, amongst the Mahomedans, or any other people. Of chair-worshippers, and chain-worshippers, and cradle worshippers, there is a plentiful crop, even amongst those who have narrowly escaped being made Chancellors of the University of Cambridge.

\* "*Sedes capiens de stercore nomen.*" (Cardinal Stephanescus.) A representation of this chair is engraved in the Companion to the Latin Dictionary, under the term *sella balnearis*, or *pertusa*, which was the classical name for such an article.

† "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill."—(Caerem. Roman., i, 2, 3.)

Here, then, is a chair of undoubted Roman make, for it originally belonged to the *Thermæ*, which was undoubtedly used in the early ceremonials of the Papal church; and if Lady Morgan could have confounded the stone chair at Venice with the wooden one at Rome, so might Dr. Wiseman, by a parity of reasoning, have confounded the marble chair at Rome with the wooden one in the same capitol. After the return of the Popes from France to Italy, this stupid and indelicate observance was dispensed with,\* so that the pontiffs of those days gained more wisdom from their sojourn at Avignon than ours seem to have done from their flight to Gaeta.

If Dr. Wiseman should be unwilling to accept this explanation, under the plea that he cannot afford to admit any more mistakes after having been proved guilty of so many, I will furnish him with another hint, which may not be very remote from the truth. The *lituus* of Romulus was saved by a miracle, which rendered it fire-proof when the temple wherein it was placed happened to be burnt down;† and was afterwards preserved by the priesthood as a relic of extraordinary sanctity, which they would not allow the profane public to touch.‡ There is scarcely a miracle recorded in the Pagan legends which has not its exact counterpart in the Papal ones. Thus we find that the chair of St. Peter was endowed with the same anti-combustive properties as the *lituus* of Romulus, for it would not take fire when a great conflagration broke out in the Vatican temple, which consumed with its flames every thing else around it.§ I take it for granted that Dr. Wiseman does not place implicit credence in the Pagan fable; and I presume that he has

\* Other practices of past days are still, however, retained in all their vigour; for the church of new Rome, which boasts of being always the same, is as unwilling as its votaries to relinquish former precedents. As the ancient worship had its "Venus Cloacina" so has the modern its "Sancta Maria in cacaberis;" and, singularly enough, of all the Madonnas that decorate the streets, houses, and churches of the Eternal City, this is the one to whom its inhabitants pay the greatest devotion, and make the most frequent offerings.

Centumque Sabæo

Ture calentaræ.—

In the good old times a couple of papal soldiers might be seen on the stairs of the Trinità de' Monti, mounting guard with fixed bayonets over the sacred deposits. Garibaldi's men had other work to do; but now, since French armies have restored the *statu quo*, we may presume that the post of honour has been ceded to the gallant comrades of "Edgar Ney."

† Valerius Maximus, i, 8, 11; Cicero Div, i, 17.

‡ Plutarch, Camill., p. 145 D.

§ Severanus de vii urbis ecclesiis, p. 152. S. Petri lignea cathedra exorto forte incendio, et omnia circum-circa late depascente, in mediis flammis divina, ut credimus, virtute illæsa permansit.

but little confidence in the Christian one, since he carefully abstains from making any allusion to it in his pamphlet, though it is related in the text from which his own is generally copied. He is clearly not possessed by any heretical hatred of miracles, nor fear of recounting them, as he boldly chronicles no less than three performed by himself upon this ill-used chair, and therefore would scarcely refuse to make stock out of this one, if he did not think it, like the winking Madonna of Avignon, too strong for the digestion even of his "Catholic readers." The chair then *was* consumed in the fire, amongst the other stage property of the church. But the Popes would not wish to loose the prestige of having possession of St. Peter's episcopal chair, which would be the first step towards dethroning him from his bishopric of Rome. How could the loss be remedied, and the original imposture kept up? Nothing so simple or so easy. It was only to send down to the Ghetto, the Wardour-street of Rome, and purchase some old-fashioned or outlandish piece of furniture from a Jew broker, while the change might safely be concealed by placing it out of sight and touch, as the Roman pontifices did with their wand of Romulus. This substitute is the chair which Denon and Champollion saw with the Mohammedan inscription, which was not understood at the time of its purchase. It is highly probable that it does not even resemble the chair engraved in our frontispiece, which may come from another source, and represent the one that was burnt, and passed off for St. Peter's; but which, I have shown, from its constructive style and character, could not have been older than two centuries at the very least after the Apostle's death. Both the one and the other are therefore ecclesiastical forgeries. But the explanation here offered will account for the otherwise inexplicable discrepancy between the descriptions which the two Italian contemporaries, Febei and Chimentelli, give of what is supposed to be the same object; \* and the equally inexplicable reason why the figure of the chair which Chimentelli in his text promises to produce, is not to be found in the book. †

\* See above, p. 17.

† Chimentelli, *Marm. Pisan.*, cap. 19. *Ligneæ est, et admodum rudi opificio, cujus tibi iconem profero, ne tuo studio aut pietati desim.* There is, however, a seat (No. 41) in the plates, to which I have not been able to detect a reference. It accords exactly with the above description, and is placed next to the medal of Alexander VII, and thus, from its locality, may be the one promised. If so, it settles the question at once; for it is a *low, four-legged stool, without any back to it*, and has not the slightest resemblance to Dr. Wiseman's "architectural chair," or to our frontispiece.

Febel propagated the received myth by describing and engraving the elder chair in obedience to the wishes of the church, or possibly out of a misplaced or mistaken devotion to what he considered her interests. Chimentelli, as a learned man, discovered the fraud, but as "a good Catholic," was induced to withdraw the proof, by refraining from the publication of his picture; for which act it is not improbable that he received the present from Alexander VII, of the medal above mentioned.

The Revelation of St. James, that was written with the apostle's own hand, and lay buried in Spain from that time to the fifteenth century, had some parts in modern Spanish, which was not in being in the time of the apostle. When it was objected that this circumstance proved it to be a forgery, the learned Aldrete boldly asserted that St. James foreknew, by the gift of prophecy, when his writings would be dug up, and therefore used the language that would be current at the period of their discovery. In this defence Aldrete evinced both wit and effrontery; but Dr. Wiseman is only endowed with the latter quality, and resorts to the unworthy expedient of reviling instead of refuting his adversary. It is true that his "Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statement" were written when he was only an aspiring priest, working for preferment. But he, too, is now an apostle, as well as St. James. His travelling cloak, and hat, with its lappets,\* have been pre-

\* It may not be generally known that the official costume, which the Pope presents to a cardinal upon his election, symbolizes the ordinary travelling dress of an ancient Greek messenger, termed in that language 'apostolos,' who is always represented in works of art with similar appendages to those above. The cardinal's pallium, made from the finest wool of a lamb shorn, slain, and suckled by sacred sisters secluded in a sanctuary, represents the coarse mantle, or *pallium* as the old Romans called it, adopted by travellers of that nation. The red stockings counterfeit their boots, which were laced round the legs with red thongs. The low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat is the ordinary Greek *petasus*, also worn upon journeys; and the lappets are the *redimicula*, which served to fasten it under the chin, or sling it at the nape of the neck, when not required as a covering. The other ecclesiastical hats also merit elucidation. The papal tiara is the bonnet which descended from the Persian Magi, through the pontiffs of ancient Rome, to the brows of their successor, his holiness Pío Nono. The episcopal mitre is a bonnet worn by the kings of Persia, Media, and Armenia, adopted by Alexander after his conquest, and transmitted to his successors, who founded the dynasty at Antioch; but said by the disciples of Dr. Pusey to symbolize the "cloven tongues" which descended on the apostles at the feast of Pentecost. The form of the bauble, which has never been used in England since the Reformation, or since the days of archbishop Laud at least, may not be known to the majority of people in this country who are not Puseyites. I must, therefore, refer them to the episcopal carriage of the Bishop of London, on the panels of which it is gorgeously emblazoned. That locality is sufficient to testify the accuracy of the delineation. It will there be seen that the tongues of the mitre

sented to him by the Pope. The gift of the gab has also descended upon him; for his "mouth has been opened" by the successor of St. Peter. May we hope that the next *blast* which issues from it, if directed towards a lady, may possess more of the apostolic leaven, be tempered with Christian charity, and not devoid of solid learning. The task will not be an easy one, after the signal failure of the first experiment, which, so far from proving that this hidden chair is "just such a one as the antiquarian would suppose to be given by a wealthy Roman senator to the ruler of a church which he esteemed and protected," has demonstrated, on the contrary, that it is precisely what it has been called by a distinguished ecclesiastic of his own creed, the learned and eloquent Barnabite friar, Father Gavazzi, "a bit of rotten upholstery, which modern imposture exalts to a pinnacle of shameless fraud." "What name, then,"\* to conclude with one of the few original passages in Dr. Wiseman's pamphlet—"What name, then, can we give to the writer, who, soberly professing to instruct and improve, scruples not to propagate an untrue story, which would suffice, if proved," *as it has been in these pages*, "to blight for ever the character of many respectable and dignified individuals, to hold up to public abhorrence the hierarchy of a religion professed by millions of Christians, and record against that religion itself a weighty charge of hypocrisy and imposture."

Some apology, or at least excuse, may seem due for an attempt to treat with seriousness what in itself appears

are not round at their extremities, like those of the apostles and of other men, but sharply pointed, so that they can only symbolize the tongues of the magpies, which were slit with a silver sixpence to make them talk. The three-cornered hat worn by the priests at Rome affords a still more remarkable specimen of symbolization, the meaning of which was generously imparted to me by one of themselves. He said that it embodied one of the deepest mysteries of the church, which was only expounded to those initiated by long service, the enjoyment of high preferments, and the possession of superior devotion. "But," he continued, "as holy church has always exhibited an especial tenderness towards heretics, both before and after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and moreover has constantly encouraged the pursuit of knowledge since the time when the 'Lexicon' of Scapula and Lady Morgan's 'Italy' were inserted in the 'Index Expurgatorius,' I may safely venture to gratify your innocent desires. Know then, my son, that the three points of this hat symbolize the three great privileges enjoyed by the priesthood at Rome, in which the laity are not permitted to share. *Primo*, we dine at everybody's table, and nobody dines at ours. *Secondo*, we know everybody's secrets, and nobody knows ours. *Terzo*, we salute everybody's wives, and nobody salutes ours." You may now understand why his eminence, cardinal Antonelli, distinguished the ladies of Rome by the endearing name of "prostitutes," and the holy city itself as one huge counterpart of his brother cardinal's "back slums of Westminster."

\* N. Wiseman, Rome, 1833.

to be so unimportant, if not insignificant, an object, which Messrs. Town and Emmanuel, or Levi, or Isaacs, or any intelligent connoisseur would at once decline as an investment for his capital upon the character given to it by the owners. But people will believe, without seeing, what they would not buy, even upon credit, without a rigorous examination; and no less than five different treatises, some of a certain bulk and pretension, have been written with the express purpose of exacting this belief; while every remonstrance against the assumption has been immediately cushioned, as far as practicable, by the Index Expurgatorius. Hence it will readily occur, that at the head-quarters of the Propaganda—and the inmates of that hornets' nest are pretty shrewd judges—the matter is regarded in a far different light, and the importance of keeping up the delusion by no means considered of slight moment: not without reason. The claim arrogantly asserted by the Church of Rome to universal spiritual supremacy—that claim, which, ever since the fatal dogma was invented, has formed the chief obstacle to civilization and progress, because, wherever admitted, it leaves no repose in religion or in politics—no choice for rulers or people, but an alternative of extremes, bigotry or infidelity, serfdom or anarchy,—that claim depends upon three, and three only, alleged facts:—a quibble upon the name of Peter; his sojourn at Rome; and the possession of the chair in which he is said to have sat and taught in that city. The first of these allegations has been already explained;\* and the simple explanation is alone sufficient to destroy it. The second remains undecided by historical proofs; indeed, the balance of evidence is against it. The third, which, if proved, would be a positive confirmation of the second, is devoutly, and doubtless conscientiously, believed by a very large number of amiable persons, duped by a small number, less scrupulous, but more interested than themselves. Surely, then, it is no waste of labour to show, in the only way that it can be shown, by recurring to antiquarian knowledge, that the reasons upon which such a belief rests are not only worthless in themselves, but positively destructive of the assumption they were intended to encourage; more especially when they have been ostentatiously put forth by an individual, who now adds, to the reputation which he once enjoyed for superior learning, the influence acquired by high ecclesiastical rank; and yet does not scruple to aid on

\* In a note, p. 23.

the cherished policy of foreign despots, under the guidance of an ultramontane propaganda, by lighting up the flame of civil discord and religious feud throughout the length and breadth of a land, where he was generously received and tolerated for many years with every mark of courtesy and respect. I would also here venture to suggest, that the application of antiquarian pursuits to *practical* purposes has more value than is usually accorded to it. So long as the antiquarian contents himself with emulating the skill of a Jew broker or curiosity dealer, by merely collecting a parcel of old croziers and reliquaries into glass cases, in order that they may be worshipped as idols by crowds of enthusiastic devotees, he is a pest to society, or at best but the dangerous agent of an effete system of superstition, which no longer accords with the character of the age we live in. But when the results of an intelligent observation, and patient study of ancient monuments and customs, are reduced into active operation, and practically applied as subordinate to, or confirmatory of, the evidence extracted from written texts, they afford the best, because the most striking, aids towards the discovery of historical truths. In the hopes of supplying, however imperfectly, an example of such an application, the present pages were designed, though with the consciousness that there are many others more competent and able to enter upon the same field of literature, which has hitherto been too little cultivated in this country.





and Roman Antiquities," and may help to pay back not a little of the debt which our modern scholars have so largely incurred to the critics and philologists of Germany. It comprises a glossary of all the words representing visible objects connected with the arts, manufactures, and every-day life of the Greeks and Romans, each of these objects being represented by a faithful copy from some classical original, and each word accompanied by a clear and simple explanation, remarkable for the terse communication of much reading and original thought. We have rarely seen a happier idea worked out with such abundant yet unostentatious knowledge. The design is carried out perfectly in every part; and, in such portions as we have consulted, the information is not only full of curious knowledge derived from personal observation, but of original and very valuable suggestions."—*Examiner*, Jan. 27, 1849.

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